

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Rm. 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

0221 '99 MAY 14 P2:22

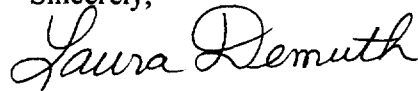
Dear Sir;

I wish to comment on the matter of labeling irradiated foods. I feel strongly that the consumer should be able to make informed decisions as to the procedures involved in the processing of foods. The current labeling requirement should be maintained so that consumers are able to decide for themselves whether or not they wish to eat irradiated foods. A recent CBS poll found that 73 percent of people nationwide oppose food irradiation and that 77 percent indicate that they do not desire to eat irradiated foods. With such a high opposition to the food irradiation process, I think it unconscionable to consider either reducing or removing the label on irradiated foods.

Aside from the issue of labeling, I think that the FDA and Congress need to closely examine the food irradiation process itself. The decisions regarding food irradiation have so far been based on political and economic considerations, without sufficient attention being made as to the health and environmental implications. Along with the destruction of bacteria in foods, irradiation creates new chemicals in foods such as benzene, a known carcinogen, and it destroys essential vitamins and nutrients. To date, no studies have been made regarding the long-term safety of food irradiation. Of equal concern is the transportation, containment and disposal of cesium 137 which would pose additional environmental threats to workers and surrounding communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Laura Demuth
2750 Lannon Hill Road
Decorah, Iowa 52101

98N-1038

C 1606

Laura Demuth
2750 Lannon Hill Road
Decorah, IA 52101



Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Rm. 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

20852/0003

